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ABSTRACT

Student attitudes and awareness of the placement services at Salem State College were studied. A questionnaire was administered to 300 randomly selected students, or 6 percent of the school population. Ninety percent of the respondents were between 16 and 25 years old. There were twice as many freshmen as seniors in the study sample (and the college population). It was found that although more than 84 percent of the respondents were aware of the placement services and 68 percent were aware of the location of the services, only about one-fourth ever used the services. Of the individuals (24 percent) who used the placement services (primarily seniors) 55 percent indicated satisfaction with the resource materials and 62 percent were satisfied with the staff. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents reported satisfaction with the workshop and consultation aspects of the placement services. Seventy-four percent of the respondents indicated a need for career counseling and of that group, 64 percent expressed a willingness to participate in group career development counseling. Study recommendations and a sample questionnaire are included. (SW)

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An Assessment of Student Attitude and
Awareness of the Placement Services Program
At Salem State College

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Dr. Ruth S. McClain
Associate Dean
Student Services
July 1980

SUMMARY

SUMMARY. This study was conducted for the purpose of gathering data regarding students' attitudes and feelings toward the Placement Services at Salem State College. The results of the Survey are intended to be used for both short and long range program development.

The survey used a mailed questionnaire as the vehicle for data collection. A sixty percent (60%) rate of response to the survey was realized at the end of the six (6) week duration of the study.

The randomly selected Sample closely represented the Population from which it came, and subsequently, the Respondents, too, resembled both the Sample and Population.

The resulting data, relative to the evaluation of services, must be read, interpreted and utilized with caution as the results are based on a very small percentage of the Respondents who used the services.

The results of the survey show that most students are aware of the Placement program, and know the location of the Placement Services. Though relatively few students had taken advantage of the services, the group which did so (Seniors) were traditionally the group attracted to the service. The main reason given for non-use of the Placement Services, by two-thirds of the Respondents, was that there was no need for the services offered through the Placement program.

Perhaps the most significant finding of the survey was that almost seventy-five percent (74%) of the Respondents throughout all of the classes indicated a need for career counseling and a willingness to participate in group career counseling sessions. The best time for students to participate in programs appears to be mid-morning and early afternoon.

It was hoped that the results of the survey would provide an index as to the level of satisfaction of the Placement Services as seen by the various Ethnic populations. However, the data returned was insufficient for an analysis of this factor.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary	ii
List of Tables	iv
	Page
I. Introduction	1
II. Methodology	2
Study Design	2
Data Collection	2
Instrumentation	3
Data Analysis Methodology	3
III. Analysis of Data	4
Introduction	4
Analysis of Survey Items	9
Analysis of Cross-Tabs	11
IV. Summary and Recommendations	12
Summary	12
Recommendations	13

APPENDICES

- Appendix A - Cover Letter
- Appendix B - Survey
- Appendix C - Survey Results

The few suggestions that were made relative to expanding Placement Services were primarily focused on a more comprehensive recruitment effort involving a wider range of occupations. Additional comments suggested a free resume copy service, and the development of a broader job bank for summer and part-time jobs.

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Table 3.1 - Response to Mailings	4
Table 3.2 - Comparison of Salem State College Population, Study Sample, and Study Respondents by Sex	5
Table 3.3 - Comparison of Salem State College Population, Study Sample, and Study Respondents by Class	6
Table 3.4 - Comparison of Salem State College Population, Study Sample, and Study Respondents by Residency Status	7
Table 3.5 - Age Range of Study Respondents	8

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to gather data regarding students' attitudes and feelings toward the Placement Services Program at Salem State College in order to provide information and recommendations for program development, both short and long range, for the Placement Services Program.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the survey research approach using the questionnaire as the data collection vehicle.

STUDY DESIGN. A Sample of 300 students was chosen at random, via computer assistance, from the entire matriculated Salem State College day school population (4,679). The Sample represents six percent (6%) of the population. The subjects in the Sample were represented in the following manner:

Sex:	Men	37%
	Women	63%
Residency Status:	Resident	12%
	Non-Resident	88%
Class:	Senior	15%
	Junior	24%
	Sophomore	27%
	Freshman	33%

DATA COLLECTION. During the fourth week of April, 1980, a survey questionnaire and cover letter were sent (1st class, pre-paid postage) to all 300 subjects selected for the study. After a period of two (2) weeks, a post card was sent as a follow-up reminder to those subjects who did not respond to the questionnaire. In an attempt to realize a high return rate, a second questionnaire and cover letter were sent (1st class, pre-paid postage) to the non-respondents by the end of the third week in May, 1980.

INSTRUMENTATION. The questionnaire format (see appendix B), multiple choice and open-ended, included a series of items (questions #1-5) devoted to demographic data. The purpose of the demographic items was to cross-tabulate particular characteristics of the sample with selected survey items in an attempt to have a clear understanding about specific groups of students being served.

The content items (question #6-18) were designed in order to obtain data regarding both student awareness of the Placement Services program and their attitudes about the program. The instruments were coded numerically for purposes of follow-up only.

DATA ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY. Analysis of the data was conducted during June, 1980 using the computer and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The statistics employed to analyze the data were frequencies and percentages on items #1-17; and cross-tabs: demographic variables #1-5 with variables #6-17. A summary of the open-ended question, #18, was made by hand analysis. The report of this study is intended as a base for program planning and development. It will be submitted to the Vice President, Student Services.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The data was collected over a six (6) week period of time. The overall response to the survey was 60%. Table 3.1 depicts the importance of the follow-up mailings used in the study.

Table 3.1
RESPONSE TO MAILINGS

Mailings	Returns	% of Total
First Mailing.	62	21
Second Mailing (Follow-up Post Card)	34	11
Third Mailing	84	28
Total	180	60%

The response to the second and third mailing played a significant part in the overall response to the survey. Together, the latter mailings nearly doubled the response of the first mailing.

The Study Respondents were quite similar to the Salem State College Population and Study Sample. Tables 3.2-3.4 provide a comparison of the Salem State College Population, Study Sample, and Study Respondents by sex, class standing and residency status.

Table 3.2

COMPARISON OF SALEM STATE COLLEGE POPULATION, STUDY SAMPLE,
AND STUDY RESPONDENTS BY SEX

	Women	Men
Salem State College Population	60%	40%
Study Sample	63%	37%
Study Respondents	67%	33%

A slightly higher percentage of women responded to the survey as compared to the percentage of women in the Sample. For the men respondents, just the opposite is true; a slightly lower percentage of men responded to the survey as compared to those male individuals in the Sample. In general, however, the 2-to-1 ratio of women to men seems to be consistent.

Table 3.3

COMPARISON OF SALEM STATE COLLEGE POPULATION, STUDY SAMPLE,
AND STUDY RESPONDENTS BY CLASS

	Senior	Junior	Sophomore	Freshmen
Salem State College Population	17%	23%	27%	33%
Study Sample	15%	24%	28%	33%
Study Respondents	25%	24%	25%	26%

The sophomore and Junior Study Respondents more closely represented the Study Sample and Population than did the seniors and freshmen who responded to the survey. The Respondents were, however, evenly distributed throughout each class.

Table 3.4

COMPARISON OF SALEM STATE COLLEGE POPULATION, STUDY SAMPLE,
AND STUDY RESPONDENTS BY RESIDENCY STATUS

	% of Residents	% of Non-Residents
Salem State College Population	13%	87%
Study Sample	12%	88%
Study Respondents	11%	89%

On this characteristic, the Respondents, once again, closely represented both the Sample and the Population.

Data are not available relative to the age range or the ethnic origin of the Study Sample, and, thus, a comparison of these characteristics with the Salem State College Population and Study Respondents is not possible. Table 3.5, however, provides the age range information for the Study Respondents.

Table 3.5
AGE RANGE OF STUDY RESPONDENTS

Age Range	% of Respondents
16 - 20	52%
21 - 25	38%
26 - 30	5%
31 - 35	3%
36 - 45	2%

Ninety percent (90%) of the Study Respondents are within the 16-20 yr. and 21-25 yr. age range. This data is consistent with the age range of the Salem State College Population which is approximately 55% and 36% respectively for the two ranges.

Analysis of Survey Items

Included in Appendix C is a copy of the survey with the results of each item reported by percentages. The data from this survey should be read with the following limitation:

That although there was an excellent response to the survey, both overall and by demographic breakdown, only a small percentage of the respondents (24%) actually used the placement services. Thus, the response to the questions relative to the evaluation of the services should be interpreted with caution.

The data show that there were twice as many Freshmen as Seniors in the Sample and Population. This factor, in addition to the knowledge that Placement Services traditionally attracts and serves Seniors, explains the low percentage of respondents who were able to make evaluative judgements about the quality, amount of, and kinds of services available.

The results indicate that although more than three-fourths (84%) of the Respondents are aware of the Placement Services, and approximately two-thirds (68%) of the Respondents are aware of the location of the Placement Services, only about one-fourth of the Respondents had ever used the service. The primary reason cited, by two-thirds of the Respondents, for non-use of the services was that the student felt no need for the services.

Of those individuals (24%) who used the Placement Services (primarily seniors) more than one-half indicated satisfaction with the resource materials (55%) and staff (62%); thirty-eight (38%) of the Respondents reported satisfaction with the workshop and consultation aspects of the Placement Services.

A very significant finding of the survey was that nearly three-fourths (74%) of the Respondents indicated a need for career counseling and of that group, sixty-four percent (64%) expressed a willingness to participate in group Career Development Counseling. The response to the question of the need for Career Counseling was distributed evenly throughout each class: 86% of the freshmen; 68% of the sophomores; 77% of the juniors; and 75% of the seniors. The best times of day for offering programs, based upon the response from this group, appears to be mid-morning and early afternoon, in that order of priority.

Analysis of the Cross-Tabulations

Cross-Tabulation of demographic items with content items has made the following information available:

- more than two-thirds of the Respondents are aware of the physical location of Placement Services. Those who do not know the location are most often resident men students in the Freshman class;
- two-thirds of the Respondents are unaware of the \$5.00 Placement Service Fee; Freshman men who are resident students are the group who are most frequently unaware of the fee.
- more than three-fourths of the Respondents had not utilized the Placement Services. The group who indicated the highest frequency of non-use were freshman women commuters.
- of the Respondents (one-fourth) who used Placement Services, satisfaction of the service was most expressed by the following:

Satisfaction with:
Staff

Services
Resources

Satisfaction by:
Junior, resident, men
& women
Junior, resident, men
Junior & Senior, men
& women, resident &
commuter student

The hand analysis yielded a very small number of suggestions for expanded services. Those suggestions that were offered are listed below:

- more recruitment efforts in a wider range of occupations and companies;
- more recruitment efforts in the computer field;
- a free resume copy service; and
- expand the summer and part-time employment job bank.

SUMMARY. This study was conducted for the purpose of gathering data regarding student's attitudes and feelings toward the Placement Services at Salem State College. The results of the survey are intended to be used for both short and long range program development.

The survey used a mailed questionnaire as the vehicle for data collection. A sixty percent (60%) rate of response to the survey was realized at the end of the six (6) week duration of the study.

The randomly selected Sample closely represented the Population from which it came, and subsequently, the Respondents, too, resembled both the Sample and Population.

The resulting data, relative to the evaluation of services, must be read, interpreted and utilized with caution as the results are based on a very small percentage of the Respondents who used the services.

The results of the survey show that most students are aware of the Placement program, and know the location of the Placement Services. Though relatively few students had taken advantage of the services, the group who did so (seniors) were traditionally the group attracted to the service. The main reason given for non-use of the Placement Services, by two-thirds of the respondents, was that the student felt no need for the services offered through the Placement program.

Perhaps the most significant finding of the survey was that almost seventy-five percent (74%) of the respondents throughout all of the classes indicated a need for Career Counseling and a willingness to participate in group Career Counseling sessions. The best time for students to participate in programs appears to be mid-morning and early afternoon.

It was hoped that the results of the survey would provide an index as to the level of satisfaction of the Placement Services as seen by the various Ethnic populations. However, data returned was insufficient for an analysis of the factor.

The few suggestions that were made relative to expanding Placement Services were primarily focused on a more comprehensive recruitment effort involving a wider range of occupations. Additional comments suggested a free resume copy service, and the development of a broader job bank for summer and part-time jobs.

RECOMMENDATIONS. The results of this survey have made possible the following recommendations:

1. That publicity be initiated immediately as to the services (especially career library) available in the Placement Services for all students, not just seniors.
2. That Placement Services begin to extend the publicity for its services to signs, notices of programs, pamphlets, etc. in places like the Commons, the dormitories, and the Sports Complex, as well as to student clubs and organizations.
3. That planning begin for a comprehensive Career Development counseling component of the Placement Services, and that sources of funding be explored for staff. If necessary proposals should be written for outside funding through Federal and/or State vocational Education Funds.
4. That an evaluation be designed to be used routinely by all people served by the program for immediate feed-back purposes.
5. That recruitment efforts be increased to include a wider range of occupations represented by on-campus interviews.
6. That an effort be made to increase the job bank of summer

and part-time jobs. This recommendation is not meant to overlap with the student employment program at the College, but rather to work together to increase coverage or publicity of jobs available. In addition, a concentrated effort should be initiated to work together with the Cooperative Education program for mutual/overlapping areas of service.

In conclusion, this study yielded valuable information with implications for the improvement of our Placement Services program. It is hoped that the recommendations will be considered in order to meet the needs of the Salem State College students of today.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



JAMES T. AMSLER
President

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Salem State College
Salem 01970

May 1980

Dear Student,

We recently mailed a copy of a Placement Services Survey to students from Salem State College. You were a selected member of that group. If you have returned the survey, thank you for your assistance. ~~If you have not completed yours,~~ would you please take a few minutes now to fill it out. It is very important to have a large number of students reply. Another copy of the survey is enclosed for your convenience.

Many thanks for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ruth S. McClain

Ruth S. McClain,
Associate Dean,
Student Services

RSM:mrg

enc.

SALEM STATE COLLEGE
Salem, Massachusetts

Just a reminder...have you completed and RETURNED
your Placement Services Questionnaire sent recently to
you?

If so, THANK YOU. If not, please take a few minutes to
do it now and drop it in the mail TODAY.

Many thanks,

Ruth S. McClain
Associate Dean,
Student Services

APPENDIX B



JAMES T. AMSLER
President

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Salem State College

Salem 01970

April, 1980

Dear Student:

The following survey is an attempt for us to learn more about students' attitudes and feelings toward the Placement Services Program at Salem State College. Your cooperation will enable us to further assist you with better services. The Student Services Department is conducting this survey and will be responsible for data collection and analysis.

Your immediate response to this questionnaire will help to make the results of this study a more accurate reflection of our students' viewpoints. Please complete this right now! It should take no more than ten minutes of your time. You may return it by mail as directed on the back cover of the questionnaire; NO POSTAGE IS REQUIRED.

I would like to assure you that your responses will be completely confidential. The numerical code appearing on your questionnaire is solely for follow-up purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ruth S. McClain

Ruth S. McClain
Associate Dean
Student Services

RSM:pf

PLACEMENT SERVICES SELF-EVALUATION

Directions

Please complete this survey today and return it as indicated on the back cover.
Mark your responses in the blank box provided to the left of each question.

1. Residency Status: Where do you live?

- ☐ a. Dormitory (Peabody or Bowditch)
☐ b. Off-Campus housing (live off-campus, but not at home with parents/spouse).
☐ c. Commuter from home (family residence)

2. Class

- ☐ a. Freshman ☐ b. Sophomore ☐ c. Junior ☐ d. Senior ☐ e. Other

3. Age Range

- ☐ a. 16-20 ☐ b. 21-25 ☐ c. 26-30 ☐ d. 31-35 ☐ e. 36-45 ☐ f. over 45

4. Sex

- ☐ a. female ☐ b. male

5. Ethnic Origin

- ☐ a. Native American/Alaskan Native ☐ b. Hispanic ☐ c. White, not of Hispanic origin
☐ d. Black, not of Hispanic origin ☐ e. Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ f. Cape Verdean
☐ g. Afro-American

6. Do you know that there is a Placement Services Program on Campus?

- ☐ a. Yes ☐ b. No

7. Do you know where the Placement Services Office is located?

- ☐ a. Yes ☐ b. No

8. Are you aware that you pay a one-time Placement fee of \$5.00 in the first semester of your senior year?

- ☐ a. Yes ☐ b. No

9. Have you ever utilized the Placement Services?

- ☐ a. Yes ☐ b. No

10. If you answered yes to #9, how satisfied were you with the resource materials of the Placement Services?
- ☐ a. Very Satisfied ☐ b. Satisfied ☐ c. Dissatisfied ☐ d. Very Dissatisfied
☐ e. Did not use resource materials
11. If you answered yes to #9, how satisfied were you with the services (workshops, consultations) of the Placement Services?
- ☐ a. Very Satisfied ☐ b. Satisfied ☐ c. Dissatisfied ☐ d. Very Dissatisfied
☐ e. Did not use the Placement Office Services
12. If you answered yes to #9, how satisfied were you with the staff of the Placement Services?
- ☐ a. Very Satisfied ☐ b. Satisfied ☐ c. Dissatisfied ☐ d. Very Dissatisfied
☐ e. Did not use Placement Services
13. If you answered no to #9, what is the main reason you have not used the Placement Services?
- ☐ a. I did not know the service was available ☐ b. I have not had the need for the services
☐ c. Other
14. Placement Services currently offers the following services. Please place a check by the services you have utilized:
- ☐ a. Career Days ☐ b. Workshops (resume preparation, interviewing, job search techniques, etc.)
☐ c. On-Campus Interviews ☐ d. Senior Placement File ☐ e. Career Resource Library
☐ f. On-Campus Job Recruiting
15. What time of day would you most likely attend workshops or use the services of the Placement Office?
- ☐ a. early a.m. ☐ b. Mid a.m. ☐ c. early p.m. ☐ d. Mid p.m. ☐ e. evening
16. To what extent do you feel you need Career Development counseling?
- ☐ a. to a very little extent ☐ b. to a little extent ☐ c. to some extent
☐ d. to a great extent ☐ e. to a very great extent
17. Would you participate in group Career Development counseling?
- ☐ a. Yes ☐ b. No
18. What kind of services would you like to see included in the Placement Program if we could expand the services of the Placement Program? Please list your suggestions:

Thank you for your co-operation. Please turn the page for directions for returning your questionnaire.

Dr. Ruth McClain, Associate Dean
Student Services Office
Salem State College
Salem, MA 01970

When completed, please fold,
fasten, and drop in mail.
Postage is prepaid.

APPENDIX C



JAMES T. AMSLER
President

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Salem State College
Salem 01970

April, 1980

Dear Student:

The following survey is an attempt for us to learn more about students' attitudes and feelings toward the Placement Services Program at Salem State College. Your cooperation will enable us to further assist you with better services. The Student Services Department is conducting this survey and will be responsible for data collection and analysis.

Your immediate response to this questionnaire will help to make the results of this study a more accurate reflection of our students' viewpoints. Please complete this right now! It should take no more than ten minutes of your time. You may return it by mail as directed on the back cover of the questionnaire; NO POSTAGE IS REQUIRED.

I would like to assure you that your responses will be completely confidential. The numerical code appearing on your questionnaire is solely for follow-up purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ruth S. McClain

Ruth S. McClain
Associate Dean
Student Services

RSM:pf

PLACEMENT SERVICES SELF-EVALUATION

Directions

Please complete this survey today and return it as indicated on the back cover.
Mark your responses in the blank box provided to the left of each question.

1. Residency Status: Where do you live?

- 11% ☐ a. Dormitory (Peabody or Bowditch)
26% ☐ b. Off-Campus housing (live off-campus, but not at home with parents/spouse)
63% ☐ c. Commuter from home (family residence)

2. Class

- 26% ☐ a. Freshman 25% ☐ b. Sophomore 24% ☐ c. Junior 25% ☐ d. Senior ☐ e. Other

3. Age Range

- 52% ☐ a. 16-20 38% ☐ b. 21-25 5% ☐ c. 26-30 3% ☐ d. 31-35 2% ☐ e. 36-45 ☐ f. over 45

4. Sex

- 67% ☐ a. female 33% ☐ b. male

5. Ethnic Origin Insufficient Data

- ☐ a. Native American/Alaskan Native ☐ b. Hispanic ☐ c. White, not of Hispanic origin
☐ d. Black, not of Hispanic origin ☐ e. Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ f. Cape Verdean
☐ g. Afro-American

6. Do you know that there is a Placement Services Program on Campus?

- 84% ☐ a. Yes 16% ☐ b. No

7. Do you know where the Placement Services Office is located?

- 68% ☐ a. Yes 32% ☐ b. No

8. Are you aware that you pay a one-time Placement fee of \$5.00 in the first semester of your senior year?

- 31% ☐ a. Yes 69% ☐ b. No

9. Have you ever utilized the Placement Services?

- 24% ☐ a. Yes 76% ☐ b. No

10. If you answered yes to #9, how satisfied were you with the resource materials of the Placement Services?

- 7% ☐ a. Very Satisfied 48% ☐ b. Satisfied 5% ☐ c. Dissatisfied 9% ☐ d. Very Dissatisfied
31% ☐ e. Did not use resource materials

11. If you answered yes to #9, how satisfied were you with the services (workshops, consultations) of the Placement Services?

- 6% ☐ a. Very Satisfied 32% ☐ b. Satisfied 13% ☐ c. Dissatisfied 7% ☐ d. Very Dissatisfied
42% ☐ e. Did not use the Placement Office Services

12. If you answered yes to #9, how satisfied were you with the staff of the Placement Services?

- 15% ☐ a. Very Satisfied 47% ☐ b. Satisfied 9% ☐ c. Dissatisfied 7% ☐ d. Very Dissatisfied
22% ☐ e. Did not use Placement Services

13. If you answered no to #9, what is the main reason you have not used the Placement Services?

- 18% ☐ a. I did not know the service was available 66% ☐ b. I have not had the need for the services
16% ☐ c. Other

14. Placement Services currently offers the following services. Please place a check by the services you have utilized:

- 10% ☐ a. Career Days 10% ☐ b. Workshops (resume preparation, interviewing, job search techniques, etc.)
6% ☐ c. On-Campus Interviews 13% ☐ d. Senior Placement File 11% ☐ e. Career Resource Library
6% ☐ f. On-Campus Job Recruiting

15. What time of day would you most likely attend workshops or use the services of the Placement Office?

- 16% ☐ a. early a.m. 35% ☐ b. Mid a.m. 21% ☐ c. early p.m. 18% ☐ d. Mid p.m. 10% ☐ e. evening

16. To what extent do you feel you need Career Development counseling?

- 9% ☐ a. to a very little extent 17% ☐ b. to a little extent 52% ☐ c. to some extent
17% ☐ d. to a great extent 5% ☐ e. to a very great extent

17. Would you participate in group Career Development counseling?

- 64% ☐ a. Yes 36% ☐ b. No

18. What kind of services would you like to see included in the Placement Program if we could expand the services of the Placement Program? Please list your suggestions:

- More recruitment efforts in computer related careers
- Career counseling; vocational aptitude testing
- Free resume copy service
- More recruiters in wider range of occupations
- Expand summer/part-time job bank

Thank you for your co-operation. Please turn the page for directions for returning your questionnaire.

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